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Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 29 June 1994, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. BUTLER	(Australia)
later:	Mr. DANGUE REWAKA (Vice-President)	(Gabon)

CONTENTS

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

AN AGENDA FOR DEVELOPMENT (continued) (A/48/935)

Mr. REY (Colombia) said that, for an agenda for development to be successful, a firm commitment was required on the part of the international community, and a principal share of that responsibility lay with the developing countries. His delegation supported the position of the Group of 77 on the agenda. It was only by consolidating economic growth and development that the international community would be able to guarantee a peaceful and democratic transition to the new international order which had begun to take shape at the end of the cold war. Democracy not only represented a guarantee for the participation of all segments of the population in defining their own destiny, it also implied a representative and universal system of international relations, open to all cultures and types of government. A central objective of an agenda for development should be the eradication of poverty, which was the most severe economic and social scourge of the present era. Sustained economic growth and mechanisms which allowed for an equitable distribution of benefits were required to satisfy the basic needs of populations and raise living standards. For economic goals to be sustained, restrictions that hindered access to markets, investment, technology and flows of information to developing countries had to be eliminated. Economic and social goals could not be achieved if the asymmetrical conditions of the international economy continued to prevail.

The market was an efficient instrument for development. However, the State was the only institution which could correct the imperfections of the market and thwart the problems of marginalization, poverty, unemployment and environmental degradation. Therefore, before addressing the subject of a market-oriented economy, it was necessary to discuss a development-oriented economy and economic and social development. It was alarming that in the current context of increasing globalization, the role of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres had ostensibly diminished. That situation was due, in part, to the fact that some countries favoured other institutions, but also to the lack of a fresh vision of its future role. The role of the United Nations should be

(Mr. Rey, Colombia)

redefined so as to prevent it from being eclipsed by other international institutions. The agenda for development lacked action-oriented proposals aimed at resolving existing imbalances in development. The report of the Secretary-General (A/48/935) made no specific recommendations as to how to improve the relationship between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. Those institutions, and the World Trade Organization, should work closely with the United Nations system if an agenda for development was to lead to a new and genuine partnership for development. A will to modify the prevailing rules of the game and allow for the transparent and free functioning of markets was essential if that partnership was to be viable.

Mr. VINAS (European Commission) said that the European Community agreed that development was a process that should address social issues, questions of equity, environmental challenges and problems arising from demographic factors. It should, above all, ensure an appropriate equitable distribution of the fruits of growth and expansion in order to fight against poverty. Over the past 20 years, the growth rate of the developing countries had been almost double that of the industrialized nations. While there had been substantial improvements in social indicators such as life expectancy, infant mortality rates, literacy and access to drinking water, not all developing countries had shared those gains. The continuing existence of acute poverty, hunger, disease and illiteracy in many developing countries was attributable in part to inadequate policies and unfavourable income distribution. A further problem was rapid population growth. Policies should take account of those factors and ensure adequate resources for education, training and access to basic services. They should also ensure the effective working of the labour market and the efficient management of the environment. Those efforts should be supported by fair taxes and redistribution. The European Community paid increasing attention to such factors in its assistance programmes.

The role of the European Community in the area of trade had contributed significantly to the development process. Imports of manufactured goods from the developing countries constituted the most rapidly growing sector of trade in the European Community and had doubled in volume during the 1980s. The European Community was a very open market for developing countries and would become even more so as a result of the Uruguay Round. The European Community had proposed a new general system of preferences, which introduced a number of new and

(Mr. Vinas, European Commission)

important incentives for the development of more sustainable growth. It was aware that official development assistance (ODA) would continue to be crucial to the success of the development process. The European Community had embarked on a series of initiatives in its Asian and Latin American programmes and its Mediterranean policy in order to create more stable conditions for investment in developing countries. Those initiatives encouraged joint ventures between firms in Europe and the developing world so as to channel investment, technical assistance and the transfer of technology and managerial know-how. To ensure that its objectives were achieved in the most effective way, the European Community, through its institutions, had considered ways of better coordinating the cooperation programmes of member States both at the policy and at the operational level. National policies for development had to be supported by the international community in order to be successful and, in that regard, the industrialized countries had a special responsibility to ensure the efficient functioning of the international economic system.

Mr. JEHAIMI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) said that many developing countries still lacked the fundamentals of development: peace, justice, economic development, democracy and a sound environment. Further international cooperation and more effective machinery to translate that cooperation into practical results were required. The ethnic problems and internal conflicts witnessed by some developing countries clearly reflected the failure of development efforts. His delegation was of the view that certain factors, including highly protectionist policies, restrictions on technology, and falling prices of primary goods and raw materials, exacerbated economic problems and hampered development. Economic sanctions, when imposed on small countries, impeded the social prosperity and economic development of those countries. Asset freezes, embargoes, trade restrictions and other economic practices, which were employed for political reasons, ran counter to world peace and development. Such practices had adversely affected his country's development efforts and could harm its economic relations with other States. His delegation called on the international community to take effective measures to halt such practices and ensure that problems were resolved through mutual understanding and negotiation.

Mr. KITT (Ireland) said that a practical and action-oriented document was needed to establish clear recommendations and provide Governments with a real basis for action. The eradication of poverty lay at the heart of all international endeavours in the broad field of development. While some progress had been made in tackling the causes of world poverty, the situation in some countries had grown worse. Urgent remedial action was needed to improve the lot of the many millions who lived in dire poverty. The frightening growth of the world's population made the need for an effective response even more pressing. The current climate, which favoured constructive change at the United Nations, provided a good opportunity for action on poverty and the improvement of mechanisms for helping those in need.

The international community should be prepared to grant the Trinidad terms and, in some instances, do even more to help countries with a severe problem of indebtedness. The recent agreement of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), signed at Marrakesh, had been hailed as a landmark in the process of opening up and improving world trade. However, it should work for the benefit of all, and not just the strongest. When establishing better access to markets for the developing countries, steps should be taken to monitor closely how well those countries were able to benefit from that improvement. More must be done to enable the least developed countries to break out of the cycle of poverty and dependence which had impeded their development. A fundamental component of the new approach to development should be a restructured United Nations that could respond effectively to the demands and challenges of a changing world.

Mr. MATHISEN (Norway) said that while his delegation was fully aware of the dangers and difficulties facing the international community, it believed there had been many positive achievements to date. Those included an emerging consensus on the main ingredients in development-promoting policies, both at the national and international levels, a new pragmatism that should make it possible to effectively address development agendas, and the finalization of the Uruguay Round, which had provided a further impetus for multilateralism. Many countries were already reaping huge benefits from sustained reforms and many of the strongest growth impulses now came from the developing countries. Lastly, some progress had been made in addressing environmental problems. The five dimensions of development identified in the agenda for development offered a

(Mr. Mathison, Norway)

useful framework for thought and action and were key parameters in the common drive for a better world.

However, the operational part of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/935) did not clearly identify the role of the United Nations in development; nor did it indicate how that Organization should adapt to new realities. It was necessary to determine how the United Nations could improve the division of labour between the various actors on the development scene and to identify the comparative advantages of the various institutions. The specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions should achieve better coordination, and inter-agency cooperation and coordination should be enhanced to secure coherent development assistance from the United Nations system as a whole. It was necessary to determine how the five dimensions of development, outlined by the Secretary-General, would be translated into practical work on the part of the United Nations. An improved United Nations could provide independent analyses, a meeting place and a framework for intergovernmental cooperation, technical assistance and humanitarian relief. Unless all the Member States and the Secretariat improved their efforts to make the Organization more effective, the United Nations would lose relevance and would no longer be in a position to play its proper role.

Mr. GOLOB (Observer for Slovenia) commended the Secretary-General for his comprehensive and thoughtful report on an agenda for development, which expressed realistic views on the relationship between economic growth and social development and incorporated the lessons of recent experience. In his view, the cold war would not be truly over until it was generally accepted that profound changes were needed on both sides of the former dividing line.

The social cost of transition could threaten to derail it and needed to be addressed by social policies that were not mere stopgaps but an organic part of the transition process.

Slovenia had already made great strides in its own historic transition process by bringing inflation down to 11 to 13 per cent and restoring economic growth to 3 to 4 per cent per year; it expected to be entering a period of economic fine-tuning and full integration into Europe within three years. Involvement in the transition process, however, need not mean self-absorption and a callous disregard for the neediest. His country was eager to participate in a search for better and more modern paths to development. Much of the old

(Mr. Golob, Observer, Slovenia)

thinking and vocabularies arising out of opposing systems should be relinquished in favour of pragmatic models in which the State would play a diminished role. The United Nations could help foster the conviction that it was better to undertake new and difficult steps than to repeat old mistakes. It was to be hoped that the World Summit for Social Development would provide a forum for sharing experiences of both success and failure in transition and transformation, from which important insights might be drawn.

The interdependence of economic and social issues was one of the main messages of the agenda for development, and the United Nations system should also seek to work in an integrated fashion. Social policies and good governance involving universally accepted human rights standards were important components of a meaningful, coherent economic policy and, conversely, economic issues had to be taken into account in formulating social policies. The ethical dimension of development should surely be an essential plank in the development platform. The problems of unemployment required not only pragmatic action, but a new commitment to basic values affecting the world of work.

The preparation of policy recommendations would require much further thought and discussion. His Government welcomed the announcement by the President of the General Assembly of a series of world hearings on development, and fully supported the Secretary-General's efforts to make the United Nations system more effective and better coordinated. He hoped that the Bretton Woods institutions would give serious consideration to the views expressed in the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. He welcomed the proposals of Mr. Camdessus, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), concerning IMF participation in the world summits on population and on social development.

Mr. LI Zhaoxing (China) said that his delegation agreed with the Secretary-General's view that development was in crisis and a solution was urgently needed. Development formed the foundation of peace, and the realization of economic growth and sustainable development in the developing countries was at the core of world development. While the world had witnessed tremendous changes, so that it was appropriate for the agenda for development to reflect the new reality, the fact remained that only economic growth and sustainable development could enable countries to change situations of poverty and backwardness and improve the material and cultural conditions of life.

(Mr. Li Zhaoxing, China)

The main objectives of the agenda for development were to meet the needs of economic and social development and to narrow the gap between North and South. Imbalances in the world economy were growing greater, the rapid development of science and technology contrasting with the more than one billion people in the world living in poverty. While economic ties between countries were becoming closer, the decision-making power in world economic affairs was still in the hands of a small number of countries. Developing countries were labouring under external constraints in their attempts to compete in a fiercely competitive world market. The problems of developed and developing countries were simply not comparable. The question of how to remove man-made obstacles to world economic cooperation had become a challenge to be addressed by the United Nations and the international community, and was a subject that should be treated by the agenda for development.

An important part of the agenda should be to build consensus on development among members of the international community and to strengthen the new global partnership. While it was the task of the countries themselves to make the first efforts, international cooperation was more necessary than ever. The developed countries should step up their economic structural reforms in order to benefit economic recovery and growth in both their own countries and the world as a whole; they should fulfil their promises of technical and financial assistance to developing countries and conduct democratic and constructive dialogues with them in areas such as coordination of global macroeconomic policies, trade, currency, finance, debt, technology and sustainable development.

A major principle of the agenda should be respect for state sovereignty, national conditions and the choices made by different countries. Countries differed in their social systems, stages of development, ideologies, values, cultural traditions and religious beliefs and, as a result, would inevitably follow different paths to development. Their choices and priorities should be respected.

The first question to be addressed by the agenda was the implementation of international agreements and strengthening of the functions of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. A series of documents embodying guiding principles on development, adopted by the United Nations, were in danger of becoming mere scraps of paper. The solution was not to renegotiate them but

(Mr. Li Zhaoxing, China)

to identify the obstacles preventing their implementation and put forward specific, action-oriented recommendations on how to remove them. Such measures should include: the strengthening of the function and role of the General Assembly and encouragement of wide-ranging dialogues between North and South; the enhancement of the status of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the strengthening of its coordinating role in the United Nations economic and social system and the improvement of its decision-making processes; increased United Nations contacts and cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions; utilization of the advantages and potential of the United Nations in multilateral technical cooperation to allow for prompt response to the development needs of developing countries, first and foremost by ending the Organization's financial shortage. To be effective the agenda would need to reflect the views of the overwhelming majority of the States Members of the United Nations.

Mrs. WAZIR ALI (Pakistan) said that the world economy was once again at a major turning-point. The Bretton Woods institutions established after the Second World War had undoubtedly contributed to the growth of the world economy, but economic prosperity had spread unevenly. The gap between the developed and developing countries had continued to increase. Since 1945, the industrialized countries had made commitments to assist development in the developing countries by three means: access to finance; access to markets; and transfer of technology and skills. The concept, however, was never applied as originally intended; access to markets, money and know-how had always been unequal - an asymmetry borne out by trends in financial flows over the past four decades.

Ideally, a fair and open international trading system should form the basis for development. Her country welcomed the results of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations. At the same time, there was a compelling argument for preferential treatment for the more disadvantaged States for transitional periods, entailing greater coordination of macroeconomic policies. Efforts should be made to correct existing external and fiscal imbalances, promote non-inflationary sustainable growth, lower real interest rates, stabilize exchange rates and make markets more accessible.

(Mrs. Wazir Ali, Pakistan)

Official development assistance would have to remain an essential source of aid to the poorest and least developed countries. Aid programmes of donor countries had seldom reached internationally agreed targets based on GNP, a situation exacerbated by the unfair conditions imposed by donors. More equitable financing arrangements needed to be worked out. It was a matter of grave concern that financial commitments made to the United Nations development system had been declining steadily. The agenda for development must call for new and innovative modalities for funding.

The hope that the end of the cold war would release resources for development had so far not been realized. A proportion of the reduction in military expenditures should therefore be allocated to development.

The burden of debt-servicing payments had severely constrained growth and development. A case could be made for cancelling all or a substantial part of the debt of the least developed countries.

The agenda for development should foster the transfer of technology to developing countries on preferential terms and discourage policies that militated against their ability to use scientific and technological developments.

Most developing countries were forced to confront immediate fiscal and monetary problems by implementing structural adjustment policies that severely eroded their ability to pursue programmes for social and human development and adversely affected the most vulnerable portion of their populations. What was needed was "people-centred sustainable development" with a special emphasis on poverty alleviation. A supportive international economic environment was crucial to the success of the domestic efforts of developing countries to eradicate poverty.

The agreements reached at the Rio summit were an important advance towards recognizing equitable development and environmentally sound development as twin imperatives.

Her country would like to see the following specific elements included in the proposed agenda for development: (a) an agreement on a non-discriminatory world trading system; (b) official development assistance as the essential source of concessional aid; (c) new and innovative methods for fund-raising; (d) development assistance programmes geared to the priorities of the recipient

(Mrs. Wazir Ali, Pakistan)

countries rather than the goals set by the donors; (e) allocation of a proportion of reduced military expenditure to development; (f) a solution to the problem of the foreign debt of developing countries; (g) direct foreign investment as the major source of outside financing; (h) the enhancement of opportunities for technology transfer; (i) emphasis on "people-centred sustainable development"; (j) the fulfilment of global commitments made at the Rio summit.

Her Government agreed with the Secretary-General that the basic responsibility for changing the human condition rested with national Governments. Her Government had been working since 1988 on reforms aimed at economic liberalization oriented towards human-centred development. Under the leadership of a democratically elected Muslim woman Prime Minister, Pakistan was preparing to forge ahead with its national Agenda for Change, which was in keeping with the United Nations agenda for development.

Mr. TURNQUEST (Bahamas) said that development was a shared concern of all nations, rich and poor, regardless of political system; it followed that international cooperation for development should be strengthened. Regrettably, as the developed world was pulling out of recession, the economic situation was stagnating or deteriorating in many developing countries. While Member States must assume responsibility for their own socio-economic development, solutions to the problems created by poverty, unemployment, degradation of the environment and the refugee situation would require an integrated approach by the international community. It was his hope that the agenda for development could provide a coherent strategy for a new, inclusive vision of world development. His Government supported all realistic measures to promote economic development and placed special emphasis on human resource development, the key to sustainable productive employment.

The recent Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States had revealed that past and present approaches to development had often resulted in threats to the environment. His Government was committed to ensuring that all programmes for the expansion of tourism, which despite diversification would continue to be the economic mainstay of the Bahamas for the foreseeable future, were both economically profitable and environmentally sound.

(Mr. Turnquest, Bahamas)

Inordinate pressure on the social system of a country had a direct impact on its development. The influx of immigrants from Haiti and Cuba placed tremendous demands on his country's social services and natural resources. No small developing nation could bear such burdens without support and assistance from the international community. He hoped that the agenda for development would institute a system of international cooperation to facilitate the mobilization of domestic resources and external assistance.

His Government attached great importance to the full participation of developing countries in decision-making for the resolution of world economic problems. While developing countries worked to build up their own national capacity, developed countries and international organizations must endeavour to improve the global economic environment and provide support and assistance.

A consolidated database and interactive communications system designed and operated by the United Nations would provide small States with a single point of entry to data, expertise and comparative experiences and a facility for integrating information into strategies for sustainable development.

He felt that it was crucial that the international organizations involved in development, and particularly the specialized agencies of the United Nations system, the World Trade Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions, should coordinate their efforts.

He hoped that the agenda for development could correct an over-reliance on per capita income as a measure of need, a misleading yardstick in the case of small island States like the Bahamas. Many of his country's requests for financial and technical assistance and training had been denied on the basis of such criteria. A more perceptive approach might salvage projects with special potential.

Mr. SPETH (Administrator, United Nations Development Programme) cited a number of reasons why an alternative to the United Nations in development did not exist (A/48/935, para.14). First, United Nations development programmes were concrete programmes of assistance and, while some could be made more effective, many had been extremely successful. Second, the work of the United Nations reflected the widely shared priorities of nations, including the priority of the poor majority, which was development. The Organization's work in development responded to a real need to alleviate such problems as poverty

(Mr. Speth, UNDP)

and hunger, joblessness, social disintegration and conflict, environmental deterioration, population and migration pressures and the denial of fundamental freedoms.

The United Nations must maintain a balance between peace-keeping and activities aimed at promoting human betterment. It was not practical to separate development from peace-building, for preventive development could help to preserve the peace. Nor was it practical to separate humanitarian emergency relief and refugee programmes from development. Characterized by impartiality and universality, the United Nations was in a unique position to forge international agreements; it could also provide development support for those agreements. Development assistance programmes must provide the developing world with a genuine sense of ownership, free from the political and economic interests of the major donors. Such ownership and trust would facilitate candid policy dialogue, sustained technical cooperation for capacity-building, untied aid and uncommercialized aid, cooperation on political and economic transitions, and capacity-building for better governance and social integration.

The United Nations could be a powerful force in the cause of human-centred and sustainable development by building on its history, mandates and strengths. As a universal body, it could offer services to the larger development assistance community. As a body whose work was country-driven and country-based - not Headquarters-based - it had the capacity to implement international agreements at the grass-roots level. As its mandate was comprehensive, it could establish linkages among the economic, political and social spheres of development and deal with most economic sectors and issues. It could harmonize work on refugees, humanitarian relief, and post-crisis recovery and rebuilding, and it could focus on issues of governance in addition to economic issues. It was committed to people, to the environment and to addressing the needs of the poor. It could work with the business community and centres of technological expertise all over the world, in order to promote access to necessary technology. It could also forge links with non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations in order to make them stronger development partners. Lastly, it could provide leadership in addressing key macroeconomic forces, including trade, private investment and debt from the perspective of

(Mr. Speth, UNDP)

sustainable human development. Those capacities must be brought to a new level of integration and operational competence through a stronger, shared vision of the work of the Organization and increased funding. New patterns of governance would also be important.

Mr. MAKAREVYCH (Ukraine) said that the situation in the successor States to the former Soviet Union could not be compared to the situation in other former communist countries. The main difference was that, in the successor States to the Soviet Union, the concept of private ownership had been non-existent and the market mentality had been suppressed. Those States were also experiencing serious difficulties which were interfering with the implementation of their market reforms. His delegation fully agreed with the conclusion contained in the report of the Secretary-General on the importance of finding the right blend of government direction of the economy and encouragement of private initiative (A/48/935, para. 50).

Modern Ukraine was situated in the centre of Europe but would not serve as a buffer zone between East and West. The signing in June of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between the European Communities and their Member States and Ukraine reflected his country's desire to be part of a united, indivisible Europe. Ukraine was the first country in the Commonwealth of Independent States to conclude such an agreement with the European Union. The document opened up opportunities for political and economic cooperation with the Western States. Ukraine also supported genuine integration of the Eastern States on a voluntary basis. Essential to that process would be the elimination of the highly centralized socialist economic system.

His delegation proposed the study of the issue of establishing the stabilization fund for the development of the economies in transition. It could be of genuine assistance to the States concerned. In the case of Ukraine, it could be effectively used for the formation of a stabilization fund for the new national currency; for the provision of financial assistance to relieve the energy crisis and for material and financial support for nuclear disarmament; for assistance in eliminating the effects of the Chernobyl disaster and increasing the safety of nuclear reactors; and for the development of the private sector. The leading international financial institutions could

(Mr. Makarevych, Ukraine)

participate in the establishment of such a fund. The realization of his delegation's proposal would make it possible for millions of people in Eastern Europe to overcome crisis situations and enjoy the rights and freedoms enshrined in international legal instruments. His delegation believed that assistance to the economies in transition was comparable to investing in the economies of developed countries.

Ukraine was prepared to play an active role in the economic and technical programmes conducted by the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system. In that connection, it was concerned that donor countries were too cautious in providing financial resources for the implementation of specific projects in Eastern Europe. That was not consistent with General Assembly resolution 48/181 on integration of the economies in transition into the world economy. The resolution called, inter alia, for the strengthening of the capacity of the United Nations system to conduct analytical activities with regard to the problems of the Eastern European States. His delegation also hoped that the international community would focus greater attention on improving market access for exports by countries with economies in transition, including Ukraine.

His delegation agreed with the statement contained in the report of the Secretary-General concerning the accelerated impact of negative shocks in an increasingly interdependent world. That should be taken into account in deciding measures of economic coercion against States in accordance with Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. In the case of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), it was difficult to tell whether sanctions were directed at the State which violated international law or at neighbouring countries and the region as a whole. His delegation would elaborate on that point later on in the session.

Mr. Danque Rewaka (Gabon), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. GRANT (Executive Director, United Nations Children's Fund) noted that United Nations activities embraced all five fundamental pillars of development: peace, the economy, the environment, social justice and democracy. The fact that the task of development involved all those dimensions and not the economic dimension alone was a reflection of the times. Since the Second World

(Mr. Grant, UNICEF)

War, a tremendous revolution had taken place in the perception of the State's responsibility towards the average person, and far more had come to be expected from development.

There was a strong and growing consensus concerning the need to refocus on issues relating to poverty and human need. A number of initiatives had proved that that new consensus was valid and, above all, that commitment led to concrete results. Even the poorest countries were making progress in certain areas. Common as it was to speak of the lost decade of the 1980s, it was equally common to note major exceptions to negative experiences. One positive experience of the 1980s had been the World Summit for Children and the international support mobilized for its goals and strategies. The World Summit had been followed up by national programmes of action covering more than 90 per cent of the world's children. A country-by-country mid-decade review indicated that most countries would achieve the goals set for 1995. That augured well for what might be achieved by the year 2000.

Attached to his statement was the first page of the preliminary report on the world social situation, published in 1952. It was striking to note how far the international community had strayed from the goals contained in that visionary report. He was pleased to note that attention was again being focused on them.

Mr. TCHUROV (Bulgaria) said that new concepts and approaches to development should be based on a number of conclusions contained in the report of the Secretary-General. Those conclusions were, inter alia, that development could be sustained and sustainable only if none of its dimensions - economic, social, humanitarian and environmental - was overlooked; that there was no single formula for achieving economic growth; and that there was no substitute for the United Nations as a unique forum for addressing all elements of global development and providing policy guidance on the basis of a multidisciplinary and integrated approach. Democracy was also vital to the achievement of human-centred development.

Global peace and security would be jeopardized unless a more socially and economically balanced world was created.

(Mr. Tchurov, Bulgaria)

The imposition of sanctions decided by the United Nations Security Council often created considerable hardships for poor and neighbouring countries and hampered their development. That was particularly true in the case of countries with economies in transition and should be taken into account when trade and economic sanctions were imposed by the Security Council. Although there was wide agreement on how to reduce the impact of sanctions on third States, assistance offered thus far had not been sufficient to compensate for their losses.

Expectations concerning the use of the peace dividend for economic and social development had been too optimistic. In many ways, military expenditure all over the world had diminished the prospects for sustainable development. The proposals concerning arms trade restrictions would be effective only if they were implemented on an equal basis.

While Governments of countries in a state of transition recognized their primary responsibility for implementing reforms, the magnitude and complexity of those reforms called for international support. The United Nations and its specialized agencies should therefore continue to focus attention on all the problems of those countries. Referring to the critical level of foreign indebtedness and its effect on development, he expressed the hope that "debt-for-development" and "debt-for-nature" options would be utilized. His delegation shared the view that market access would give impetus to the expansion of international trade. The successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations and the establishment of a world trade organization would help to increase economic growth throughout the world. Particular importance should be attached to ensuring market access to all countries, in compliance with the rules of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

Growing economic interdependence called for certain changes in the international "division of labour". The United Nations should provide policy guidance and advice to individual States; Member States should determine the scope of United Nations activities and seek to adapt them to new international realities. The ongoing process of the revitalization of the United Nations in

(Mr. Tchurov, Bulgaria)

the economic and social sectors should be based on more clearly defined priorities and more specifically targeted goals with clear time-limits.

Mr. Butler (Australia), President, resumed the Chair.

Mrs. SADIK (Executive Director, United Nations Population Fund) noted some of the lessons which had been learned in the 50 years of the Organization's existence, in particular concerning the importance of the empowerment and participation of all individuals and of respect for fundamental human rights, and of women's central role in the development process.

The free-market economic system had proved to be extremely effective in many ways, particularly in directing the flow of investment to areas where it generated the highest returns. However, the market system had limitations as well. For example, those countries that did not have the human resources or environment to attract private flows were precisely the countries that needed them most.

For years, the Organization, had been a forum for the debate of controversial issues, such as population. It could now provide a common framework for implementing the recommendations and plans of actions formulated at a wide range of conferences - the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women.

The role of the United Nations as a partner in the transfer of technology and expertise was vital, and would only increase with the development of South-South cooperation. Other assets of the Organization were its neutrality, universality and flexibility and its success in setting standards which could be followed at the national and international levels, (for example, responsiveness and transparency in human-centred development, accountability and responsibility in public investment). The United Nations system also had the ability to involve non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society in the work of development. That participatory approach characterized the preparatory process for the International Conference on Population and Development.

The specialized agencies of the United Nations system were widely recognized and respected and had set useful norms and standards. Many of them, particularly in the smaller, lesser known agencies, had excelled in research and disseminated their knowledge and expertise. Unfortunately, the work of some of

(Mr. Sadik, UNFPA)

those centres of excellence had been diluted by their constant search for funds. In her view, it should be the other way round: funds and sponsors should be pursuing those agencies which had done outstanding work.

With regard to the financing of development, the restructured governance of funds and programmes assumed a continuing, reliable flow of resources, which had not yet been guaranteed, however. One way to provide such a guarantee would be to channel all technical assistance and official development assistance funds through the United Nations system. The time had passed when bilateral donors needed to be concerned about geopolitical strategic investments.

The United Nations system must concentrate its financial support on a select number of countries, while maintaining universality in advocacy and technical and policy assistance. The Bretton Woods institutions, therefore, would not duplicate United Nations technical expertise; their role and that of international lending institutions would be to make use of the additional capacity created by technical assistance by enhancing the ability of countries to attract commercial investment. Such a flexible approach would meet the needs of countries at different stages of development requiring various kinds of support. It would permit countries to use both grant and loan funds. Technical assistance grants would decrease as human resource capacity improved and private resource flows increased.

The United Nations currently had at its disposal more experience, better technical resources and an increased awareness of how they could be used. The end of the arms race should provide sufficient financial resources for all the activities required within the United Nations system. That system represented a global mechanism that could also function at the national level and was uniquely placed to bring sustainable development closer to reality, if purposeful and decisive actions were taken.

Ms. BERTINI (Executive Director, World Food Programme) said that, within the wider context of the right to development, the "right to food" was among the most fundamental of human rights, a precondition for development and for life itself. The right to development was in serious jeopardy wherever and whenever the right to food could not be realized.

(Mr. Bertini, WFP)

As a result of a review by its governing body, the World Food Programme had refocused its efforts on three basic areas: using food to save lives in cases of emergency; using food aid to improve the quality of life for groups such as pregnant women, infants and children, for whom food was the most important form of intervention; and using food aid to help build assets, promote self-reliance and create sustainable systems through food-for-work programmes.

The World Food Programme had six suggestions to offer as components of any programme for effective development. First and foremost was the need for peace. Five years earlier, 60 per cent of its resources had been spent on development, but the lack of peace in the world had caused a shift to the point where almost 70 per cent of resources were currently being spent on emergency food relief. Second, emphasis should be placed on the needs of women and children. Women caring for their children and for their communities were making a crucial difference in keeping them alive, and a much stronger focus was needed on support for the role of women. Third, a strengthened commitment to the development of Africa was needed, and more extensive work should be done to ensure that systems were established on which to build sustainable programmes for Africa.

Fourth, development components should be included in emergency assistance programmes, while all development programmes should also contain emergency preparedness and disaster mitigation provisions. It would be a mistake to provide only emergency food and shelter, without training to build sustainable skills and communities; it would also be unwise to provide development resources without any thought for disaster mitigation. Fifth, the emphasis on coordination within the United Nations system, with the Bretton Woods institutions and also with bilateral aid, should be continued. It was essential that all elements of development in a particular country should be coordinated. That should be done in conjunction with the Government and in consultation and with the assistance of appropriate non-governmental organizations.

Finally, in the new world created by the fundamental changes in the international scene, a new view was needed, and development should be seen from current and future perspectives.

Mr. ROCHETTA (Italy), commenting on the five dimensions of development identified in the agenda for development, said that, although tragic situations of armed conflict had arisen in many areas in the recent past, the agenda for development reinvigorated the hope for peace by reaffirming the reasons for peaceful coexistence. It clearly indicated that development and peace were inextricably linked and demonstrated that the absence of development increased domestic and international tension.

With regard to the economy and human development, the greatest effort must be made to improve conditions in the poorest parts of the world, in the most critical areas of health, education and housing. The goals of the new development policy must not be economic growth for its own sake, but must involve local human resources in the productive process and in decision-making.

Like peace and the economy, the environment permeated every aspect of development. However, the link between environment and development involved more than the proper use of natural resources, since ecological balance was a vital component of human survival itself. If sustainable development was to succeed, it must become the concern and commitment not only of Governments, but of all segments of society. In that spirit, Italy had recently adopted a national plan for sustainable development to implement Agenda 21, and had fully supported the Global Conference on the Development of Small Island Developing States. In chairing the forthcoming Summit of the seven major industrialized nations, it would strive to consolidate the commitments made at the Rio Conference.

There could be no development without justice, and social development policies must be discussed at both the national and international level. Thus, his Government attached great importance to the results of the forthcoming International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development and the fourth World Conference on Women. Furthermore, the ties binding democracy to development represented an important step forward in development policy. Sustainable human development could realize its goals only when internationally recognized democratic values were protected. By the same token, a true democracy would mature by assuring equitable development that included the people in the decision-making process.

(Mr. Rochetta, Italy)

In order to implement the agenda for development, the mechanisms for international economic cooperation must be strengthened. Coordination must become a consistent practice throughout the United Nations system. Italy had gained important experience in that area through the Programme for Displaced Persons, Refugees and Returnees in Central America (PRODERE), which had improved the living conditions of people in areas affected by civil war, but had also contributed to the consolidation of peace in Central America. It believed that similar initiatives on the PRODERE model were a means of obtaining appreciable results in development policies through a coordinated multi-agency programme.

The new Government of Italy was determined to make development assistance an even more effective instrument of international cooperation, and would continue its unswerving support for and commitment to the agenda for development.

The PRESIDENT said that the time had come to address the problems of development. In his agenda for development, the Secretary-General had provided an intellectual and moral perspective on the "new culture of development and the new morality". However, the agenda had not contained proposals, and the Secretary-General was requesting other parts of the United Nations system to provide them. The President of the General Assembly had called for a basic overhaul of the Organization's development machinery.

In the course of the exchange of views that would take place regarding the agenda for development, he urged Council members to bear in mind five basic perspectives. First, there was no need to repeat the generally accepted fact that the cold war had ended, that international relations had reached a turning-point, and that the world was increasingly interdependent. Second, the major problems being faced must be accurately identified. Third, after those problems had been identified, policy priorities must be selected and agreement reached at a political level. Fourth, based on those priorities, the international community must agree on actions to be taken and by whom, by what means and with what resources. Fifth, decisions must be made on the machinery by which that work would be carried out. It must also be determined whether there was any cooperation among members of the international community. The frequent stress on the need for greater cooperation could imply that none currently existed.

(The President)

A series of basic questions also needed to be addressed in the debate: What should be the unique role of the United Nations, in particular in policy-making and operational agencies? What should be the role of the international financial institutions? What should be the role of national official development assistance programmes? What role should the private sector play in the agenda for development? What capacity did United Nations policy-making bodies have to influence macroeconomic policy? Finally, it should be made clear what groups were being addressed and who were the targets of the actions being taken: Governments, corporations, the media, non-governmental organizations, academics or the people?

When those questions had been answered, that would lead to the determination of whether a new body, perhaps a council on human and social development, would be needed to carry out that work.

The fundamental question was whether the international community could or would do anything about the situation at all. There was a strong possibility that it might content itself with formulating decisions it could not implement. As the President of the General Assembly had pointed out, that could bring the United Nations into disrepute, if the outcome of the debate remained mere pieces of paper and no change resulted. Progress had indeed been made, and there were some encouraging signs, but it was important to acknowledge that the world faced a series of global and interlocking crises in such areas as poverty, the environment and the financial situation. His remarks were motivated by the belief that the United Nations could do something about those crises. He agreed with the UNDP Administrator that the United Nations had the unique ability to act in those fields. Political decision-making was paramount, however, and would be required to make the agenda for development a reality. The Economic and Social Council had a unique opportunity to determine its practical outcome.

Ms. DEGN (Denmark) said that she was glad that the preface to the 1952 report on the world social situation had been brought to the attention of the Council. It was shocking that the Council had been aware of all those problems 42 years earlier. That introduction could easily be used for the World Summit for Social Development in 1995. The United Nations must stop being a "talk shop", for action was urgently needed.

The meeting rose at 1.05 p.m.